



Issue One: Winter

Ageing Well - North Somerset

Welcome to the first newsletter designed specifically for local people aged 65 and over, brought to you by IANS (Improving Ageing in North Somerset). The aim is to help North Somerset become a place where older people's knowledge, experience and skills are valued, their views and ideas are heard, and they get the information, help and support they need to age well!

Want to get involved?

There will be lots of ways you can help this project really make an impact locally. By being added to our mailing list, contributing ideas for the newsletter or how about volunteering for some of the great initiatives this project aims to deliver?

Not sure about volunteering? We chatted with few people about why they volunteer, what they do and what benefit they get from it.



Ron - Interviewing Team & Board Member

After working in management and conducting over 200 interviews, I thought I could perhaps share my skills and at the same time keep my brain active. It feels good to be helping older people, in some small way, by getting the right people working on this project.



Phil - VANS and Age UK

After a long aerospace career I knew I wanted to keep active in retirement. I volunteer with Age UK's befriending service, visiting older people in their homes or care facilities. Whether we take a stroll or enjoy a cuppa while chatting, I get great satisfaction from seeing the smiles on their faces.



Lin - Ageing Well's Acting Newsletter Editor

I wasn't sure what kind of volunteering would work for me. I needed flexibility as I help out with the grandkids some days plus wanted something that really interested me. I'm enjoying using my media skills again, working with the IANS team, and researching content for the newsletter.

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To find out more about volunteering:

Call: 01934 416486

Email: info@vansmail.org.uk

Online: www.vansweb.org.uk



Are You Winter Ready?



With nights drawing in and temperatures dropping it is, unfortunately, time to say goodbye to the sunshine and prepare for those chillier days.

So what should we focus on?

Staying Warm

- Ensure your heating is working and safe, get it checked if you can
- Main rooms at home should be heated to at least 18 degrees C
- Close windows/curtains at night and use draught excluders to keep out that cold air
- Layering up is the best way to keep cosy and don't forget those thermals
- Outside, wear a hat, gloves and socks to keep those extremities warm

Staying Healthy

- Book your Flu vaccine and COVID booster (if you're eligible)
- Stock up on essentials, so you don't have to head to the shops if it's icy
- Stay active, move around at least once an hour to generate body heat
- It's tempting to stay in the warm but going for a walk, to a club or keeping up your fitness class helps not just your physical but also your mental health
- Eat well, good nutrition is vital in maintaining body temperature. Think warming soups, stews or casseroles

Staying Safe

- Check up on older family, friends or neighbours (or ask them to check up on you) especially when the weather is particularly bad
- Make sure your car is winter ready, especially tyres, anti freeze etc.
- Take extra care when outside, especially if it's wet or icy, to avoid falls
- Wear suitable footwear, use walking aids if necessary and use handrails



Are You Winter Ready?

**Here's some extra winter safety advice from
the Police and Community Support Team**



Home Safety

- Secure doors and windows and use time switches to turn on lights at night to make your home look occupied even when you're out and about
- Keep curtains closed from dusk, don't let burglars see inside your home
- Mark valuables using UV pens or property marking kits to deter theft and aid recovery
- Keep paths salted and well-lit to prevent falls and discourage burglars
- Don't leave tools outside, shovels or ladders can be used to break in. Store securely out of sight
- Avoid leaving parcels outside, especially now with Christmas coming. Get them delivered to a neighbour or somewhere secure

Doorstep Crime

- Be cautious of cold callers. Winter often brings fake utility workers or charity collectors. Ask for ID and verify with the company before letting anyone in
- Use a door chain. Speak through the door or use a chain to keep it partially closed until you're sure who the visitor is
- Report anything suspicious, if someone seems to be watching homes or knocking on multiple doors, report it by calling 101

Scam Awareness

- Beware of heating or energy scams, fraudsters may offer fake boiler checks or energy-saving schemes. Only use trusted providers
- Never give out bank details or passwords over the phone or email
- Join your local Neighbourhood Watch if there is one, or sign up for scam alerts from Action Fraud



For Heating Advice:
<https://nscab.order.g.uk/cost-of-living-crisis/>

For Safety at Home:
<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-home>

Need Cash? Here's Somewhere You Can Bank On!

In this and future Ageing Well newsletters we aim to look at some of the issues local older people have been raising and one of the hot topics is the rapidly disappearing bank branches on our high streets.

Many areas used to have branches of all the main banks but according to Which magazine over 6,500 UK bank branches have closed in the last 10 years, that's over 60%! The banks say this is due to the changing way people bank with many moving to online plus of course there's the high cost of keeping local branches open. However, there's still some of us who prefer to use cash, are unable or actually choose not to use online banking, or those who simply prefer dealing with an actual person as opposed to a machine. So, where do we go now for our banking needs?

**Simply need cash?
Use your bank card at...**
a Cash Point or
get Cash Back
at the supermarket till

Head To The Post Office
If there's a Post Office near you then banking facilities are often available, including cash withdrawals, deposits of cash or cheques, and bill paying, but check what your branch offers.

The Newest Way To Bank - Banking Hubs!

These are owned and funded by Cash Access UK, a not-for-profit company funded by major high street banks, and are shared banking spaces with counter services operated by Post Office staff. At a hub customers of **all major banks and building societies** can carry out regular cash transactions, Monday to Friday, such as (see right >>>). Plus, they offer private **face-to-face** banking for more complex issues, such as helping to set up accounts, or online banking if you wish. Community Banker representatives (yes, real people) from major banks are available on different days each week.

As at August 2025 over 170 hubs have opened across the UK with many more planned. Here, in North Somerset, our first is already open in Nailsea, with a second planned for Portishead mid 2026, with the last remaining bank there, NatWest, said to remain open until then. We popped in to see what the Nailsea hub, situated currently within the Scotch Horn Leisure Centre, has to offer and heard the news that they're planning the move to their permanent premises at Courthouse, 110 High St, Nailsea, BS48 1AH, very soon.

For general transactions, for all major banks and building societies, they're open 9 to 5 Monday to Friday, but if you want to chat to a specific bank representative then they're available on different days (see right). You don't need an appointment just pop in on the appropriate day. However, some banks do offer appointments at specific times. Please visit your local hub or check with your bank to see if appointments are available.



Personal Banking:

- Pay in cash and cheques
- Withdraw cash
- Check your balance

Business Banking:

- Pay in cash and cheques
- Withdraw cash
- Access change-giving services

Bill Payment:

- Utility payments
- Top-ups

	AM	PM
Monday		
Tuesday		HSBC UK
Wednesday		NatWest
Thursday		BARCLAYS
Friday		LLOYDS BANK

So, whatever your banking needs there's nearly always somewhere nearby you can bank on!

Banking at the Post Office - <https://www.postoffice.co.uk/everydaybanking>
Banking Hubs - <https://www.cashaccess.co.uk/hubs/>

Don't Let Life Trip You Up!

Those summer seaside trips may have come to an end for another year but there are some trips we really want to avoid, especially as we get that bit older.

Tripping and falling at home is, unfortunately, one of the most common causes of injury and hospital visits for older people. However, there are often simple things we can do to try to avoid them. Exercising and maintaining your mobility, managing medications, having your vision checked regularly, and using walking aids if needed, will all help.

Plus making your home safer with good lighting, less clutter, and clean and clear floors, are all steps you can take to help prevent that nasty fall. Although, if you regularly feel unsteady perhaps it's time to make an appointment at the doctors.

Take a look at our cartoon below, then why not get together with friends and family, to see how many trip hazards you can spot!



So how did you do?

Under 4 – Not great, keep a sharper look out for hazards around your home

5 – 9 – Pretty steady, but please still be careful

10 or more – Excellent but don't let complacency trip you up!

And we really hope that's just water that cat is sitting in!

The local NHS authority has published a new website to support those at risk of falling with a wealth of information
<https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/falls-prevention/>

You can sign up for Age UK Somerset's Ageing Well and Falls Prevention exercise sessions here ...
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/activities-and-events/exercise-session-timetables/>
or call 01823 345624

How Well Do You Know North Somerset?



Round 1 – Landmarks

- A) What is the name of Weston-Super-Mare's pier: Grand, Royal or Imperial?
- B) Which motorway runs through North Somerset: M32, M4 or M5?
- C) Where is Bristol Airport situated: Langford, Long Ashton or Lulsgate?
- D) Which river is on the northern border of North Somerset: Avon, Frome or Yeo?
- E) Which National Trust property is near Wraxall: Durham Park, Stourhead or Tyntesfield

Round 2 – One for the history buffs

- A) Which county was North Somerset part of from 1974 to 1996: Avon, Bristol, or Somerset?
- B) In which decade did part of Clevedon Pier collapse: 1950s, 1970s or 1990s?
- C) What is the name of the Pill choir formed just after the end of WWI: Nightingales, Owls or Robins?
- D) Which children's author, famous for the character Willy Wonka, attended school for 4 years in Weston-Super-Mare: J K Rowling, Roald Dahl, or Jacqueline Wilson?
- E) The name of Nailsea's main shopping area commemorates which former local industry: Cider Making, Coal Mining or Glass Making?

Round 3 – Name that place

Use the cryptic clues to identify a place here in North Somerset

- A) Friend of Barbie
- B) Medical Tablet
- C) Winston
- D) Shutting securely
- E) Safe harbour in sight

Check your answers at the bottom of the page by turning it upside down or standing on your head although we honestly don't recommend that!

We hope you enjoyed this Newsletter and found it interesting. If you did then please pass it on to a +65 friend or neighbour here in North Somerset.

Alternatively, if you're a local organisation and you'd like copies of this or future seasonal newsletters then please email info@vansmail.org.uk with your organisation's name and address, a contact number and the quantity, and we'll do our best to get them to you.



Round 3 – Kenn, Pill, Churchill, Locking, Portishead

Glass Centre)

Round 2 – Avon, Oct 70, Owls, Roald Dahl, Glass Making (Crown

Round 1 – Grand, M5, Lulsgate, Avon, Tyntesfield.

Check out the answers here

So how did you do at our quiz –

